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ABSTRACT

The excavated foundations of various structures in Frederica, Saint Simons Island, Georgia, remind visitors that from 1736 until 1758, this planned community served the military garrison quartered there and housed a population of 1000. This lesson is based on the Fort Frederica National Monument listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It can be used in U.S. history units on colonization, in geography courses, and in social studies courses dealing with demography and planned communities. The lesson plan is divided into six teaching activities sections: "Setting the Stage: Historical Context"; "Locating the Site: Maps" (British and Spanish Claims in the Southeast; Southeast Atlantic Coastline from Charleston, South Carolina to Fort Matanzas, Florida); "Determining the Facts: Readings" (Building a Planned Community; War and Decline); "Visual Evidence: Images" (Plan of Frederica, prepared by Joshua E. Miller, 1743-48; Plan of Frederica and Fort Frederica; Typical House along Frederica's Thoroughfare, Broad Street; Francis Moore House Foundation); "Putting It All Together: Activities" (Living in Frederica; Reconstruction or Preservation; Moving Day; Planned Communities); and "Supplementary Resources." (BT)

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ED 463 187

Teaching with Historic Places

# Frederica: An 18th-Century Planned Community

Teaching with Historic Places
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1849 C. Street, N.W., Suite NC400
Washington, D.C. 20240

http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/31frederica/31frederoca.htm

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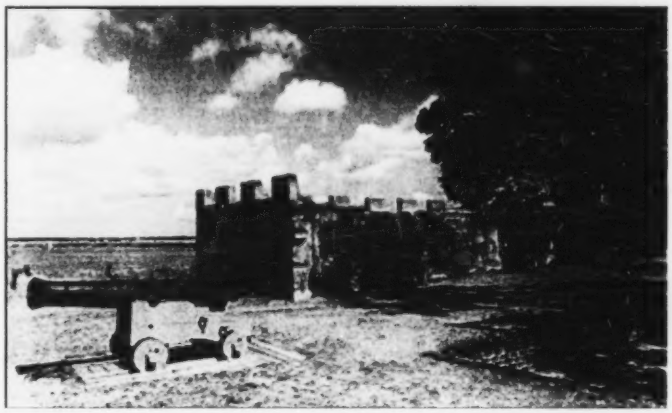
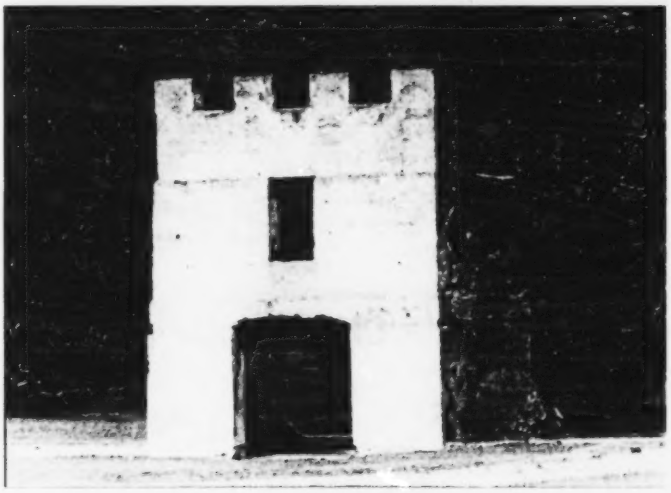
# Frederica: An 18-th Century Planned Community



*(Photo by Ed Mathews)*

On the serene, isolated west shore of St. Simons Island, Georgia, the ruins of a once flourishing 18th-century settlement stand. A powder magazine overlooks Frederica River, a reminder of the fort that protected the British colonies against the Spanish during the early 18th-century struggle for control of the southern frontier of English occupation in the New World. The excavated foundations of various structures remind visitors that from 1736 until 1758, the planned community of Frederica served the military garrison quartered there and housed a population of up to 1,000.



*(Fort Frederica National Monument)*

Strolling along the now-abandoned streets, it is easy to imagine laughing children playing under the shade of the live oaks festooned with gray Spanish moss. The gentle coastal breezes brushing by Broad Street recall a time when the air was filled with the tantalizing aroma of freshly baked bread being taken from the public ovens. Other smells and sounds are easy to evoke: the acrid odor of smoke rising from summer fires built both inside and outside the houses to ward off menacing insects, the bang of shutters as merchants open their shops for the morning business, and the quiet rustling of women's skirts as they perform their everyday housekeeping chores.

In 1736 a group of British colonists led by Gen. James Edward Oglethorpe, a member of the Trustees for Establishing the Colony of Georgia, arrived at St. Simons Island. The colony that was organized and administered by the trustees offered hope to the

unemployed in Great Britain and freedom for persecuted Protestant immigrants in Germany. As a planned community, only those people with needed skills and crafts were chosen as Frederica's first colonists. In their pursuit of opportunities in a new land, these colonists met and overcame great challenges in an unfamiliar and difficult environment, and they endured the continuing conflict between Spain and Great Britain.

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**This lesson is based on the Fort Frederica National Monument, one of the thousands of properties and districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places.**

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# About This Lesson

This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration file, "Fort Frederica National Monument," the National Park Service's visitor's guide for Fort Frederica National Monument, and data from the park's archives. It was written by Marion Robinson, a former Park Ranger at Fort Frederica National Monument.

**Where it fits into the curriculum**

**Topics:** The lesson can be used in American history units on colonization, in geography courses, and in social studies courses dealing with demography and planned communities.

**Time period:** Colonial/Revolutionary

**Objectives for students**

1) To explain Great Britain's and Spain's struggle for control of the land between South Carolina and Florida.

2) To describe the military skirmishes between Georgia's colonists and the Spanish forces of Florida.

3) To relate why the town of Frederica and Fort Frederica were established.

4) To consider what daily life was like for the inhabitants of the town of Frederica.

5) To debate the value of preserving ruins of historic sites verses reconstructing them for the public.

6) To compare the town of Frederica with their own community, as well as 20th-century planned communities.

**Materials for students**

The materials listed below either can be used directly on the computer or can be printed out, photocopied, and distributed to students.

1) two maps of the Southeast;

2) two readings that describe the development and the decline of the town and its adjoining fort;

3) two illustrations that show the defensive purpose of the fort and the layout of the town;

4) a drawing and photo related to the site.

**Visiting the site**

Located on St. Simons Island, 12 miles from Brunswick, Georgia, Fort Frederica National Monument is maintained by the National Park Service. It can be reached via U.S. 17 and the F. J. Torras Causeway. It is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily, except December 25. For more information, write the Superintendent, Route 9, P.O. Box 286-C, St. Simons Island, GA 31522-9710 or visit the park's Web page at http://www.nps.gov/fofr/

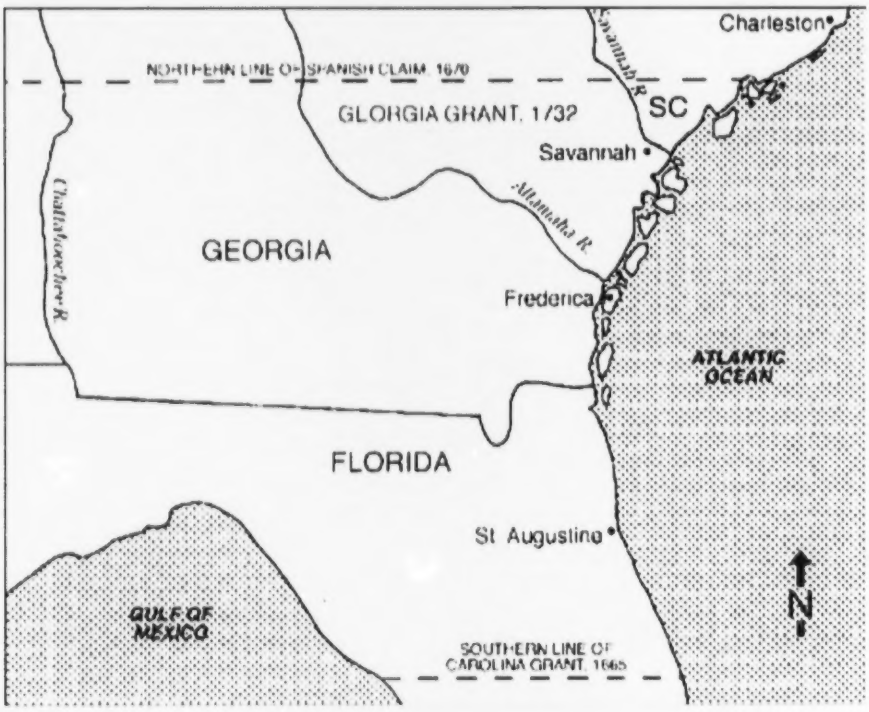
# Setting the Stage

The impetus for the establishment of the colony of Georgia was twofold. First, both Britain and Spain claimed the land between St. Augustine, Florida, and Charleston, South Carolina. Spain frequently threatened to seize the British city of Charleston. By establishing a new colony south of the city, the British hoped to put an end to those threats and secure their claim to the region. Second, during the first decades of the 18th century, Britain was overpopulated and reeling from a depression that left many of its people out of work, destitute, and, in some cases, imprisoned for debt. The new colony, an experiment in idealism, would provide an opportunity for some of those unfortunates to emigrate to America. There they would be granted their own land in exchange for agreeing to live by the rules and regulations developed for the colony of Georgia by its trustees. Hard liquor, slavery, and unlicensed trading with Indians were all prohibited. Furthermore, settlers had to agree to guard against the enemy and employ their assigned crafts.

Parliament chartered the colony in 1732 and King George II granted the trustees, under the leadership of Lord Percival, the Earl of Egmont, all the land between the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers. In 1733 Gen. James Edward Oglethorpe, a trustee and member of Parliament, first arrived in Georgia with the intention of both halting Spanish encroachments northward and creating an ideal colony that would offer a new start for some of London's deserving poor.

The ruins of Frederica, preserved as Fort Frederica National Monument, remind us of the grim struggle for empire between Britain and Spain in the southeast over two centuries ago. Although both nations claimed the land between South Carolina and Florida, Spain was a waning power in that region while Britain was busily building a vast empire stretching from Maine to Carolina.

# Locating the Site
# Map 1: British and Spanish Claims in the Southeast




St. Augustine was established by the Spanish in 1565 and Charleston (first known as Charles Town) by the British in 1760.

**Questions for Map 1**

1. Note the northernmost limit of the land claimed by Spain and the southernmost limit of land claimed by Britain (the Carolina Grant). How is it possible that more than one country could claim the same land?

2. Locate Charleston, South Carolina, and St. Augustine, Florida, and the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers. Why did Britain establish a colony in this particular area?



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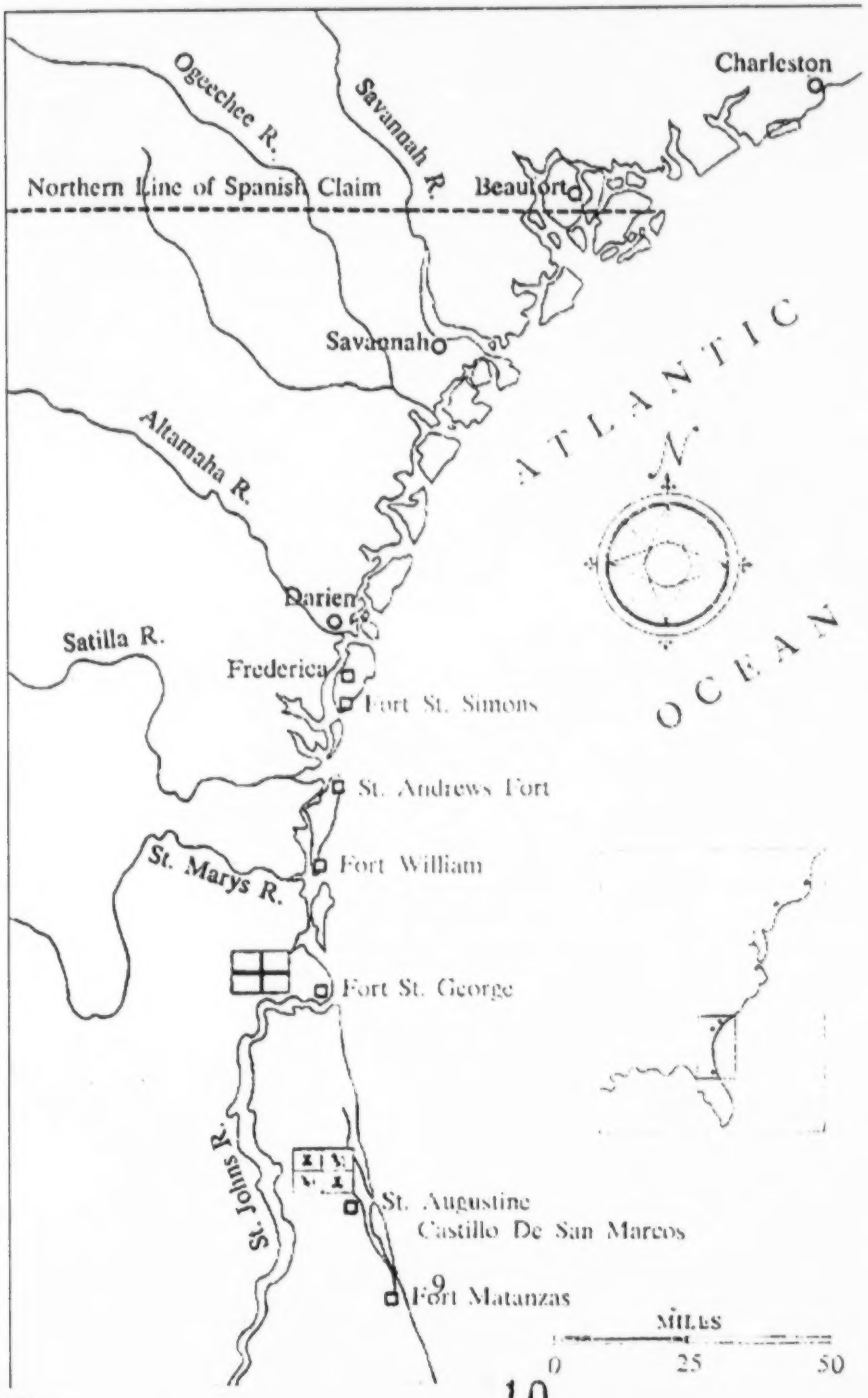
# Locating the Site
# Map 2: Southeast Atlantic coastline from Charleston, South Carolina to Fort Matanzas, Florida.



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**Questions for Map 2**

1. Locate the land that was given to Gen. James Edward Oglethorpe and his partners. Why do you think Oglethorpe believed that the region of the Altamaha River and the island near its mouth would be a good place for a fortification to repel potential Spanish invaders?

2. Note the location of Fort St. Simons, St. Andrews Fort, Fort William, and Fort St. George. Why do you think the British built forts at these locations?

# Determining the Facts
# Reading 1: Building a Planned Community

When Parliament chartered the colony of Georgia in 1732, Englishmen of all classes rallied to the idea of a new stronghold that would also serve as a utopia, or ideal society, in the American wilderness. The first shipload of 114 persons left England under the leadership of one of the colony's trustees, Gen. James Edward Oglethorpe (1696-1785). Reaching Georgia in 1733, this first group of settlers established a town on the Savannah River that they named Savannah. As settlement was not the only purpose in founding Georgia, Oglethorpe sailed down the coast in 1734 to look for strategic points to fortify against the Spanish. He found a likely site on a sea island just below the mouth of the Altamaha River. This was St. Simons, an island with thick forests, good water, and a fertile upland. He returned to England and recruited a group of settlers to accompany him back to St. Simons. On reaching the island in 1736, Oglethorpe and his settlers laid out a military fort and town, both named Frederica in honor of Frederick, Prince of Wales, King George II's son.

The colonists first raised an earthen work designed according to the ideas of the 17th-century French military engineer Marshal Sebastien Le Prestrede. Over the next few years Oglethorpe and the colonists transformed this work into a formidable fort and its nearby town into a defensive community. The fort was manned by the settlers who constructed it until 1738, when Oglethorpe brought in a regiment from England. Frederica is protected, said a visitor in 1743, "by a pretty strong Fort of Tappy [sic] [tabby is a construction material like concrete made of oyster shells, lime, sand, and water], which has several 18-pounders mounted on a Ravelin [a triangular embankment that projects out from the main ditch of a fort so it will be closest to the enemy] in its Front, and commands the River both upwards and downwards; and is surrounded by a quadrangular Rampart [an elevated fortification], with 4 bastions [the projecting part of a rampart] of Earth well stockaded and turfed, and a pallisadoed [a wall of cedar posts] Ditch."1

Oglethorpe located the town adjacent to the fort on a large Indian cornfield. He staked out 84 lots, most of them measuring 60 by 90 feet. The main thoroughfare, which divided the town into two wards, was Broad Street. The street was 75 feet wide, shaded by orange trees, and ran from the fort to the town gates. Each family received a lot in town for building a house, one acre for a garden just outside the town, and 50 acres in the country to grow crops. The first houses were palmetto huts woven by a Brazilian that Oglethorpe brought to the colony for that purpose. Frances Moore, the town's first recorder, wrote that the palmetto huts were about 20 by 14 feet and that when viewed from a distance, the town looked like a tent city. Within a year those temporary houses gave way to substantial houses built of wood, tabby, and brick in the Georgian style

popular at the time.

By 1739 the town was enclosed with a palisade, or wall of cedar posts 12 inches thick and set upright. The entrance to the enclosure was through two gates, one known as the land portal and the other as the water portal. The wall around the town gave a sense of security to the inhabitants, who knew they lived in constant danger. A moat, or ditch, was dug at the foot of the wall, and in case of attack a sluice gate could be opened to allow water from the river to enter.

The first colonists of St. Simons Island had been selected by Oglethorpe and the other trustees for their ability to contribute to Frederica's growth and prosperity. They included 44 men (mostly craftsmen) and 72 women and children.

Before these colonists left England, they signed Articles of Agreement promising to perform the duties for which they had been selected. They included a blacksmith, a wheelwright, and a public baker whom Oglethorpe brought over as an indentured servant. Others chosen to live in the new community were magistrates, constables, and tithingmen (those who collected monies due to the church), as well as a doctor, midwife, hatter, tailor, dyer, weaver, tanner, shoemaker, cordwainer, saddler, sawyer, woodcutter, carpenter, coachmaker, bricklayer, pilot, surveyor, accountant, tallow candler, cooper, locksmith, miller, and brewer (colonists were issued beer, but rum and other strong drinks were forbidden by the trustees as inappropriate for an ideal colony).

Throughout the 1730s the trustees made sure the people had a minister, whose salary came from the English Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts. First, Charles Wesley preached at Frederica, followed by his more famous brother John. These two brothers later founded Methodism. Another famous preacher, George Whitefield, established an orphanage in Savannah and often came to conduct services at Frederica. A magnetic speaker who figured prominently in the 18th-century religious revival known as the Great Awakening, Whitefield often preached outdoors because he drew large crowds to hear his sermons.

With the exception of lacking a church spire, Frederica in the 1740s might have passed for a village in the English midlands. Tradespeople and artisans prospered. Farmers successfully grew crops in the surrounding fields, doing the work themselves because slavery was forbidden in the colony of Georgia. Most families supplemented their diet with the abundant game of the region and with fish and shellfish from the river and the ocean. When increasing numbers of soldiers were brought in to protect against Spanish invasion, however, the character of the town changed. It became a supply center for the fort rather than the self-sustaining fortified town that Oglethorpe had planned.

Today we associate planned communities with models growing out of the imagination of architects, designers, and urban planners who are looking toward the future. Oglethorpe also designed for the future. If not a utopia, Frederica was a well-planned community and a reflection of Oglethorpe's foresight and careful design.

**Questions for Reading 1**

1. Why did Oglethorpe continue to sail down the coast after founding Savannah? Why did he return to England?

2. What was the first task facing the settlers upon their arrival at St. Simons Island? What is an earthen work?

3. Where was the town located in regard to the fort? Why do you think that location was chosen?

4. What jobs were represented among the early settlers? Can you think of any other kinds of people who would have been needed to create a successful town? Try to define unfamiliar 18th-century occupations.

5. Why do you think Georgia's trustees considered it important for the new residents to have a minister?

*Reading 1 was compiled from Nancy Aiken, "Fort Frederica National Monument" (Glynn County, Georgia) National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1974; and the National Park Service's visitor's guide for Fort Frederica National Monument, 1992.*

*1As cited in the National Park Service's visitor's guide for Fort Frederica National Monument, 1992.*

# Determining the Facts
# Reading 2: War and Decline

While the colonists were building a new life in Frederica, Spain saw the Georgia settlement as a threat to its interests in Florida. In 1737 General Oglethorpe returned to England to raise additional troops for the war that he felt was inevitable. A year later he returned to Georgia at the head of a 640-man regiment of British regulars known as the 42nd Regiment of Foot. The regiment was formed from a few hundred troops from Gibraltar, most of the privates of a 25th Foot standing regiment known as the King's Own Scottish Borderers, and a company of grenadiers. The grenadiers were considered the elite troops of the regiment. They carried grenades and were picked for their special skills in combat. Oglethorpe garrisoned these fresh troops at Frederica and at Fort St. Simons, a fort built on the south end of the island in 1738.

By 1739 Oglethorpe knew war was close at hand. Sea battles broke out between Britain and Spain over the slave trade. Fighting raged over the Caribbean and up the Georgia coast to Frederica. Expecting a Spanish attack, Oglethorpe ordered Frederica's population to stay within the high walls of the town. Not one to wait passively for the enemy to strike, the aggressive Oglethorpe set out, aided by troops and seamen from South Carolina, to capture St. Augustine, Florida early in 1740. He laid siege to the Spanish town but could not breach the town's extensive defenses and stone fort. By midsummer, his plans all awry, the frustrated Oglethorpe was back in Frederica. The initiative now passed to the Spanish. Collecting 52 ships and an army of more than 2,000 soldiers and sailors in 1742, they descended on Oglethorpe at Fort St. Simons. The resolute general rounded up Indians--the local Yamacraws and Creeks--and local militia to fight with his regulars. Altogether, he managed to arm about 900 men, but he faced twice that number.

The Spanish opponent was Manuel de Montiano, governor of Florida. His objective was of a punitive nature, to destroy Frederica and lay waste the coast as far north as Port Royal, South Carolina. After capturing that town, he planned to strike at the English plantation system by freeing the slaves in the surrounding countryside. In early July his ships ran past the guns of Fort St. Simons and landed troops a few miles up the inland passage. Outflanked, Oglethorpe pulled back to Frederica. On July 7 about 200 Spanish soldiers advanced up the military road connecting the two forts. Oglethorpe routed this column with a fierce attack. When Montiano learned of this repulse, he sent several hundred of his best men forward to cover the retreat. Several miles along the road these troops ran into a British ambush. That battle became known as "Bloody Marsh," because the marsh was said to run red with the blood of the dead and wounded. This British rout of the Spanish forces ended the final Spanish threat to Georgia. Oglethorpe proclaimed a day of thanksgiving for this deliverance.

Born of impending war, Frederica expired with the coming of peace. After one more

foray against Spanish Florida in 1743, Oglethorpe sailed away to England for the last time. His regiment was disbanded in 1749. Without the money brought in by the several hundred soldiers stationed at the fort, the shopkeepers and tradesmen, and the town itself, could not prosper. By 1755 Frederica presented a picture, as a visitor put it, of "houses without inhabitants, barracks without soldiers, guns without carriages, and streets overgrown with weeds." Though the town survived for a few years longer, even withstanding a fire in 1758, it had outlived its purpose and soon fell into ruin.

**Questions for Reading 2**

1. Why would Spain have felt threatened by the Georgia settlement?

2. How did Oglethorpe amass his army? How was this army successful in defeating the Spanish at Bloody Marsh? What might be the reasons a force of 900 could rout a trained army of more than 2,000?

3. Why was the defeat of the Spanish so important to the British?

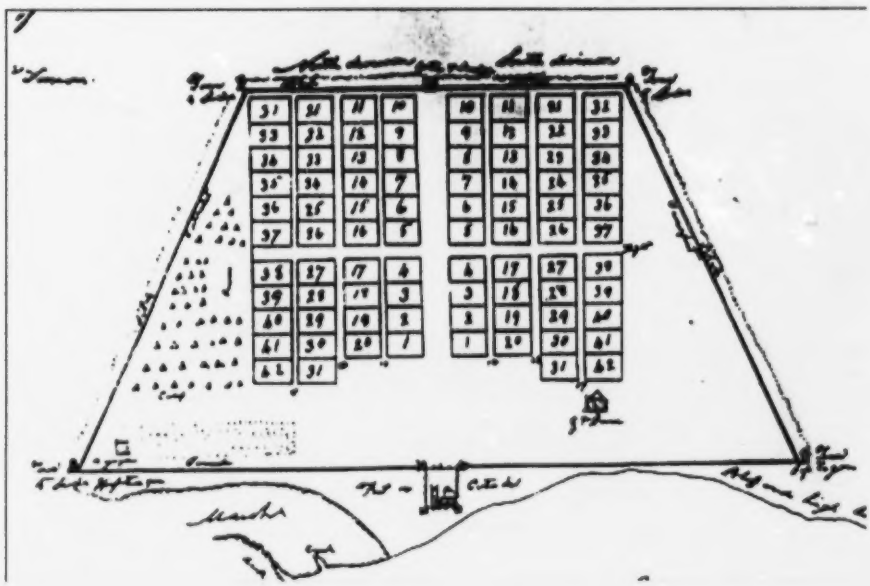
4. Why was Frederica deserted after peace was achieved?

5. Although it was short-lived, do you think Fort Frederica and the adjoining town served a vital purpose in the development of the English colonial system? Justify your answer.

*Reading 2 compiled from Nancy Aiken, "Fort Frederica National Monument" (Glynn County, Georgia) National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1974; and the National Park Service's visitor's guide for Fort Frederica National Monument, 1992.*

# Visual Evidence

## Illustration 1: The plan of Frederica, St. Simons Island, 1743-48, prepared by Joshua E. Miller.



## Illustration 2: Plan of Frederica & Fort Frederica

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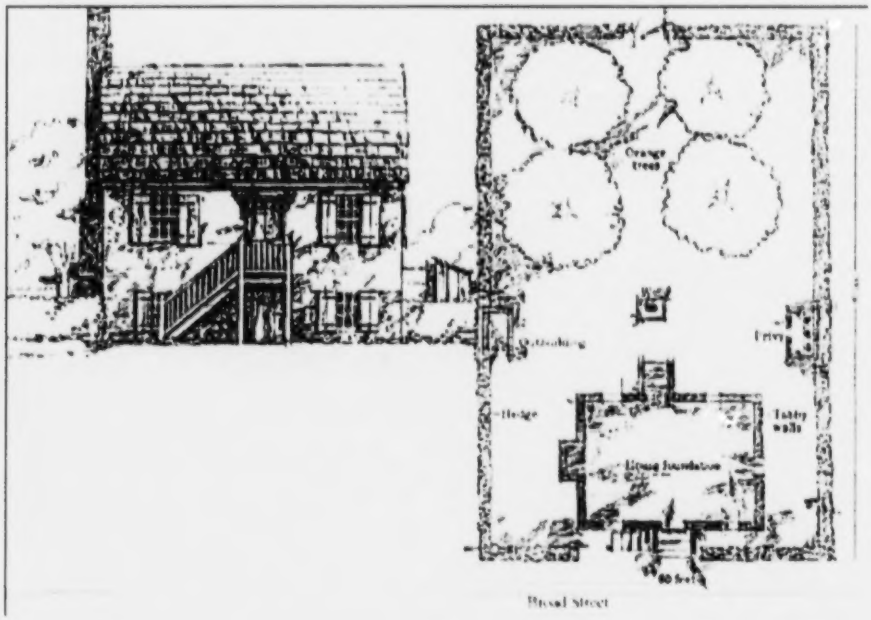
**Questions for Illustrations 1 & 2**

1. Both Illustration 1 & 2 are plat maps of Frederica, but they were produced more than two centuries apart with Illustration 2 depending on primary and secondary sources. Compare the maps and list the differences you find between the two.

2. Which map do you think should be considered more reliable? Why?

*Illustrations 1 is from Fort Frederica National Monument.*
*Illustration 2 is from Fort Frederica Association, 1969.*

# Visual Evidence
# Drawing 1: A Typical House along Frederica's thoroughfare, Broad Street



*(Fort Frederica National Monument)*

Drawing 1 is an artist's rendering of an 18th-century house and lot on Broad Street. It is based on archeological excavations of exposed foundations and knowledge of 18th-century architecture.

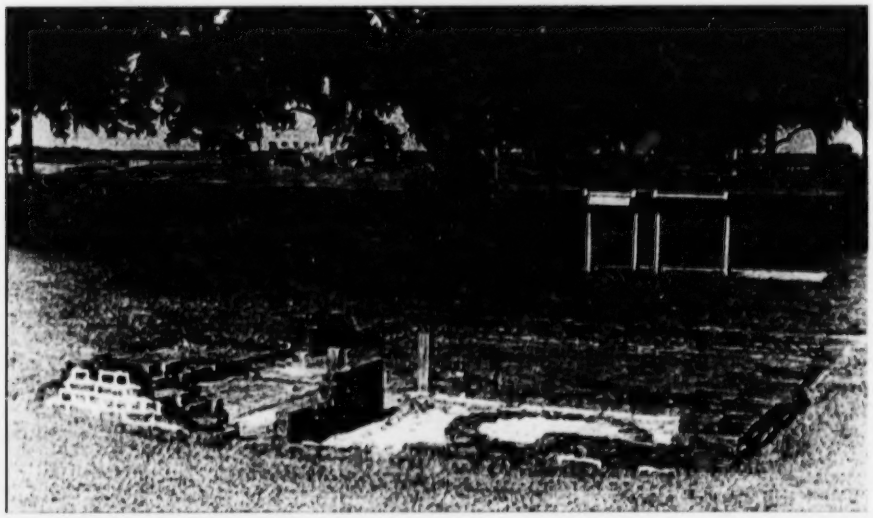
**Questions for Drawing 1**

1. Based on the size of the lot, what were the approximate dimensions of the house?

2. What structures are shown that would not be needed today? What is a privy?

3. How might the work of archeologists help you to determine how Frederica's settlers arranged the space in their homes?

# Photo 1: Francis Moore House Foundation



*(Photo by Ed Mathews)*

Photo 1 shows the foundation of the Francis Moore House in North Ward. Moore was Frederica's first town recorder, keeper of the King's Store, and Oglethorpe's personal secretary.

**Questions for Photo 1**

1. What can you learn about Moore's house by examining Photo 1? Are there questions about the house that cannot be answered from the photo? If so, what are they? How might you find the answer to those questions?

# Putting It All Together

The following activities help students better understand the experiences of early settlers and the importance of their settlements.

**Activity 1: Living in Frederica**

Have the students pretend they are original settlers practicing a particular trade or craft in Frederica. Then have each student write a letter describing the fort and town of Frederica to a friend or family member still in Great Britain. Ask them to include a description of daily life in their first palmetto bower house and then in their permanent house, the hardships and challenges they encountered, and their feelings and emotions during and after their ocean voyage. Have the students close their letters with statements about their family's satisfaction or unhappiness at their venture in the New World and their intention of either returning to Britain or staying in America. Read several of the letters to the class and then hold a general class discussion about what it may have been like to be early settlers in America.

**Activity 2: Reconstruction or Preservation?**

Divide the students into two groups and have them prepare for a debate on how to use what we know about this early Georgia settlement. Explain that either of two approaches might be taken. The village and fort might be rebuilt to their former appearances, as was done with other historic structures in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, or they might be preserved in their present condition and interpreted as archeological sites. Both approaches would use available archeological and historical research. Ask students what issues need to be considered for this debate. Then encourage their thinking by having them consider: (1) the amount of information that might be available on which to base an accurate, detailed reconstruction; (2) what would be lost if the archeological site was transformed into a reconstruction; (3) the relative costs and the funding of reconstructing buildings versus preserving the town's ruins; and (4) whether visitors can most easily understand what the town was like from a reconstruction or a site with only remains of buildings.

Assign one group the "pro" position and the other the "con" position. Then have them debate the statement: "Fort Frederica National Monument should be maintained in its present state." Have each group choose a spokesperson to present a five-minute argument and a two-minute rebuttal. At the end of the debate, release students from their assigned position and ask them to vote on the question.

**Activity 3: Moving Day**

Divide the students into small groups that represent Frederica families who realize that

since the fort has been closed, there is no way for them to make a living and they will be forced to move. Have each "family" answer the following questions: (1) Where will they move to? (2) How will they make a living? (3) How difficult will it be to start over again? They may wish to consult a U.S. history textbook to determine the options available at the time.

After the groups have recorded their ideas, have them consider how they would react if a military base, military industry installation, or a major factory that employed a large percentage of the town's population in their community closed, and they found themselves in the same situation as the settlers of Frederica. Have each family answer the same three questions and then develop a list of resources they would have today that were not available to Frederica's population. Have the class discuss each family's option to determine similarities and differences in their solutions to both scenarios.

**Activity 4: Planned Communities**

Most Europeans who settled in America made some plans for how their community would be laid out and how the new lands would be apportioned among the colonists. Remind students that the New England model provided for a large common with the most prestigious lot bordering the common for the Puritan meeting house. Have them reflect on how Frederica differed from that plan. Then explain that modern planned communities are sometimes built around an artificial lake and may mix businesses with housing areas. Ask students to use the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, or a similar source, to see what they can find out about how some specific planned communities have been laid out. A colonial example of such communities is Savannah, Georgia, also planned by Oglethorpe and his associates. Twentieth-century examples include Reston, Virginia; Greenbelt and Columbia, Maryland; and even more recently, Panama City, Florida. Have students report their findings to the class, and then have each student draw a plat map for what she or he believes would be an ideal community. Have students share their plans and then put a representative sampling on a bulletin board for display.

Now have students research their own community. When and how was it founded? How is it similar to and different from the planned communities they researched? from the town of Frederica? Hold a class discussion on the students' findings.

# Frederica: An 18-th Century Planned Community
# --Supplementary Resources

By looking at Frederica: An 18th-Century Planned Community, students will discover why this British settlement was built and how it functioned as Great Britain and Spain each struggled to control land from Charleston to St. Augustine. Those interested in learning more will find that the Internet offers a variety of interesting materials.

**Fort Frederica National Monument** http://www.nps.gov/fofr/

Fort Frederica National Monument is a unit of the National Park System. The park's Web pages include visitor information, a brief history of what happened at Frederica, and activities to learn what it was like for children of all ages during colonial times.

**National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary: Along the Georgia-Florida Coast** http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/geo-flor/g-fintro.htm

The National Register of Historic Places' on-line travel itinerary, Along the Georgia-Florida Coast explores the history of the Georgia and Florida coastline. Included on the itinerary is further information on Fort Frederica National Monument, and a history of colonial Georgia and Florida.

**National Park Service: The Golden Crescent-- Crossroads of Florida and Georgia** http://www.cr.nps.gov/goldcres/index.html

The National Park Service Southeast Region produced the Golden Crescent feature to reveal the tumultuous history and prehistory of coastal Florida and Georgia. Included on the site are numerous histories on cultural themes such as "Coastal Defenses" and "Clash of Colonial Empires." Other valuable features on the site are detailed maps to accompany the essays.

**Library of Congress: Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)/Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) Collection** http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/hhhtml/hhhome.html

Search the HABS/HAER collection for detailed drawings, pictures, and documentation from their survey of Fort Frederica. HABS/HAER is a division of the National Park Service.

**The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School Charter of Georgia: 1732** http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/ga01.htm

The Avalon Project is a collection of digital documents relevant to the fields of Law, History, Economics, Politics, Diplomacy and Government. Included in their

pre-18th-century collection is the Charter of Georgia. This document provides a better understanding of how and why Georgia became a colony.

**The University of Akron Law Review: Five Hundred Years of English Poor Laws, 1349-1834: Regulating the Working and Nonworking Poor**
http://www.uakron.edu/lawrev/quigley1.html

This review of the English Poor Laws provides a better understanding of the living and working conditions of an over-populated and depressed England during the time of Georgia's charter.

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